

IMPRESSIONISM

short described and explained



'The big Walnut Tree at Eragny', Pissarro

French Impressionism is here explained in short art quotes by Jacob Bendien.

Bendien gives as definition and main characteristic of Impressionism:

'a very subjective art style with a fleeting painting technique, focused mainly on the external world. Its friendly goal was to pleasure the spectator by using new color characteristics and joyful motifs.'

Impressionism started in Paris, France, circa 1850 – 60's. It became the first modern art movement by breaking away the heavy walls of classical painting at the official Art Academies. Famous Impressionist artists were Monet, Manet, Morisot, Pissarro, Degas, Renoir; also the young Cezanne started as an Impressionist...

The selected art-quotes on Impressionism are taken from "Trends in the Present Day Art of Painting", by Jacob Bendien.

- editor, Fons Heijnsbroek – translation, Anne Porcelijn.

Quotes on Impressionism by Jacob Bendien

- The Impressionists, who only reproduce the first impression, the first sight, the first meeting with the object, see the object merely as a useful sounding board for their own state of mind.

- The fight against the nearly obsolete academic form, and for direct and intimate contact with nature, already started by the Barbizon School (Daubigny, Rousseau, Corot, Diaz, ed.), was triumphantly continued by Impressionism.

- In this contact with nature all earlier traditions were forgotten and various new but disorganized values were developed.

- They (the Impressionists, ed.) stroll along beside the sea, gloomy or happy, paint the sea accordingly and stroll along again. They see a form and paint it in the same tone and thus continue their journey.

- It is true that in this first meeting spontaneity is presented in its purest form, but this feeling is not as individualistic as is generally presumed. Very often these spontaneous first impressions are extremely similar.

- It is, however, reality that decides the construction (of the painting fh), but this happens mainly superficially and without tension/excitement. The Impressionist has little interest in reality,.. ..he sees it through half closed, dreamy eyes.

- The entire Impressionistic painting consists only of a scarcely organized, more or less loose collection of equivalent emotions.

- In this, more or less undifferentiated collection of emotions, Cezanne (was an Impressionist painter who broke later with Impressionism, ed.) attempted to bring some structure by giving a strict construction to the form. However, this way the emotion was not given structure, but an emotionless form was added to the painting.

- Impressionism was more concerned with color, the special area of the emotions and also light and atmosphere, which was mainly ignored (c. 1908, ed.) by the Cubists as it tends to make the construction more vague.

- The origin of Cubism was resistance to Academic painting, but it was also resistance to the easy-going looseness of Impressionism.

- The Fauves (main artist of the Fauve was Matisse, ed.) continued Impressionism. The light freedom and happiness that we see so often in Impressionistic art can also be seen in the Fauves, but even more so. These traits are not appreciated by Expressionism or Cubism.

- As opposed to Impressionism that only arranges, the Fauve artists want to compose.

- The space made by Impressionists is imitation nature and atmosphere. It is space filled in. That of the Fauves is empty; it is a symbolic space, a breadth of feeling.

- When Impressionism is happy, and this concerns mainly the French Impressionists, they value beauty and charm above all else. The same cannot be said of the Dutch and German Impressionists (rather dark and grey in their colors, ed.) .

- The Impressionist, with his easy-going charm does not upset anybody in a nicely decorated salon, which is why the Expressionists see them as superficial. Even the melancholic or gloomy Impressionist is not out of place in the salon. His melancholy , which is after all no more than the mood of the artist, does not cause offence, in fact it gives the impression of an appropriate gravity.

- After Van Gogh, the often superficial Impressionism was no longer satisfying. Art became profound. Vague in all its profundity.

- Characters with more depth, even if they do have the urge to express themselves, at the same time often have feelings of shame. These artists are often found among the Impressionists.

- ..the ever-present light (in paintings of Impressionism, ed.) blends with and vivifies all things. Nothing should be absolutely fixed... ... so that the bright gleam which lights the picture, or the diaphanous shadow which veils it, are only seen in passing, in the actual moment during which the viewer looks at the scene, which, composed as it is of reflected and ever-changing lights, palpitates with movement, light and life.

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